

## THE MEDIATING INFLUENCE OF AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB INVOLVEMENT AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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### ABSTRACT

*Employee engagement has become important in conceptualizing and measuring the impact of human capital in Business organizations and integration of many aspects of HR- employee satisfaction, commitment, motivation, trust, loyalty and involvement. The aim of the study was to establish the mediating effect of affective commitment on the relationship between job involvement and employee engagement. An explanatory research design was adopted and a sample of 100 employees of Aircel ltd., through simple random sampling was selected. The study established a significant mediating effect of affective commitment on the relationship between job involvement and employee engagement. The study recommends that organizations striving to enhance the employee engagement should focus on enhancing the affective commitment of the employees toward the organization. This study recommends further research on the mediating effect of affective commitment on the relationship between job involvement and labour productivity.*

**KEYWORDS:** Employee Satisfaction, Commitment, Motivation, Trust, Loyalty and Involvement

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### INTRODUCTION

#### Background of the Study

Shuck (2011) searched relevant systematically reviewed academic definitions of engagement. Based on eligible publications, he identified four approaches to define engagement

One of the four approaches is the satisfaction- engagement approach

As per Gallup organization, employee engagement refers to an individual's involvement and satisfaction as well as enthusiasm for work. This approach has a significant impact in academia as well, since Gallup's research established meaningful relationship on employee engagement and business outcomes. According to this approach, an individual's involvement for work is one component of employee engagement. This element of this approach is taken for this study.

#### Measures

The respondents indicated their responses on all scale items using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). An overall score for each scale was arrived by average item ratings of each scale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of the measured variable

Affective commitment was measured with a three items ( $\alpha = .83$ ) that is used in previous research and found to be reliable. (eg., Stinglhamber & Vadenberghe (2003) developed this scale taking the three highest loading items from a confirmatory factor analysis conducted on a revised version of Meyer, Allen and Smith's (1993) affective commitment scale.

Gallup's research on engagement has established meaningful links between employee engagement and business unit outcomes, such as customer satisfaction, profit, productivity, and turnover (Harter et al., 2002).

Q12 has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 at the business-unit level

The Lodahl and Kejner job involvement scale has been used by several corporations and organizations across the world. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.88.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Indian Telecommunications network being the third largest in the world and it is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Indian economy. Indian telecom is the fastest growing industry next only to IT industry. The mobile subscriber base in India expanded to over 800 million. It has been demonstrating strong growth due to the Government support in the form of many regulatory and policy change. The key regulatory and policy changes created positive impact on the industry. Even though there is an increased clarity on the direction of regulation and policy, some of the policies have gone against the interests of the incumbent operators and created a major financial crisis. For example, the policy changes like issue of new licenses to new mobile operators led to a large number of players entering the telecom market and ending up in over capacity led hyper competition. The industry is currently facing slow down in revenue growth and huge pressure on profit margin. Some of these key challenges faced by the telecom industry are listed below. Lower tariff and high introductory offers which the industry resulted in multiple SIM ownership and reduced realization per minute of use. The new operators who entered the market offered subscriptions at throw away prices loaded with free talk time. The incumbent operators are also forced to get into this tariff war and this converted the existing paying minutes to non paying minutes and slowed down the revenue growth of the sector. The operators are working on new business models and radically change the products to improve the profitability. Hence managing employee turnover has thus become a major challenge for the Telecom industry, especially in India. This has led organizations to focus on methods and techniques to increase employee engagement and reduce attrition. It is now well understood by organizations that employee engagement is the force that drives performance outcomes.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

- To establish the effect of Job involvement on employee engagement in Aircel Ltd.,
- To investigate the mediating influence of affective commitment on the relationship between job involvement and employee engagement

### **HYPOTHESIS**

- Job involvement is positively related to employee engagement
- Affective commitment mediates the relationship between job involvement and employee engagement
- Job involvement is positively related to affective commitment.

- Affective commitment is positively related to employee engagement

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Independent Variable: Job Involvement**

**Job Involvement** refers to the psychological and emotional extent to which someone participates in their work, profession and company. Top performers are engaged in their work and have high job involvement. Lodahl and Kejner's job involvement scale has been used by corporations to study the job involvement levels

### **Mediating Variable: Affective Commitment**

**Affective Commitment** is the emotional attachment of an employee toward an organization. If an employee has a high level of affective commitment, he enjoys his relationship with the organization and is likely to stay. He stays because he wants to stay.

Affective commitment refers to employees' perceptions of their emotional attachment to or identification with their organization." Williams, J. (2004).

### **Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement**

Wellins and Concelman (2004) suggest that "Employee engagement is the illusive force that motivates employees to higher levels of performance. This coveted energy is an amalgam of commitment, loyalty, productivity and ownership." they further added that it includes, "feelings and attitudes employees have towards their jobs and their organization. "

Robinson, Perryman and Hayday (2004), define "engagement as a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. An engaged employee is aware of the business context, works with colleagues to improve performance within the job for the benefit of the organization". They further add that organization must develop and nurture engagement which is a two way relationship between employer and employee.

Lucey, Bateman and Hines (2005) have deciphered that "Employee Engagement is how each individual connects with the company and the customers "

Sarkar (2011) opined that employee engagement is a barometer that determines the association of a person with the organization.

Common to all these definitions is the idea that employee engagement is a desirable state, having an organizational purpose. It connotes involvement, commitment, passion, dedication.

The Gallup Organization, (2006) defines engaged employees as those who work with passion and feel a profound connection to their company and drive innovation and move the organization forward

Bloom et al.,(2002): Although the primary focus of engagement efforts has mostly been on team building programs, it is been found to be related to employee cooperation, involvement, satisfaction and commitment.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

Explanatory design is used for the study. According to Kothari (2004), explanatory research design is suitable for the study that seeks to determine the relationship between variables. Dawson(2002) and Ranjith (2005) state the

explanatory design focus on developing casual explanations to explain the phenomenon under study when the problem is not very well understood or unstructured

### Sample and Sampling Procedure

The target population is the employees of Aircel ltd., Chennai. The respondents are 100 employees of Aircel ltd., through simple random sampling

### Data Analysis

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation for the Study Variables**

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
Job Involvement	3.32	.76	(.88)		
Affective Commitment	3.94	.64	.62*	(.83)	
Employee Engagement	3.70	.52	.49*	.64*	(.91)

N=100. Cronbach's alpha is shown parentheses on the diagonal.

\*p< .001 (two tailed)

## DISCUSSIONS

### Findings, Implications & Results

Mean, Standard deviation, Inter correlation and alpha reliabilities for the variables are presented in Table 1. Cronbach's alpha shows the significance of the survey instrument. The inter correlation value shows job involvement is positively correlated to affective commitment and affective commitment is positively correlated to employee engagement. And job involvement is positively correlated to employee engagement. Hence affective commitment mediates the relationship between job involvement and employee engagement

The process underlying the relationship between Job involvement and employee engagement and affective commitment is found that the employees who are involved in job is found to be more affectively committed to the organization and vice versa and affective commitment predicts the level of employee engagement. Hence the findings show a positive relationship between Job involvement and employee engagement and the relationship is mediated by affective commitment.

The present findings shows emotional attachment of the employees toward the organization explains how they approach their work with job involvement.

Finally the implications for practice is the study identified two predictors of employee engagement which suggests two means through which employers can promote employee engagement. Employers can promote employee engagement by increasing the level of affective commitment. For this matter the organization can look into the organization commitment literature for guidance,(eg Meyer et al.,2002). Affective commitment can be enriched by treating the employees in a fair and just manner, appropriate performance management, enriched work and supportive organization culture.

### Study Limitations

The study is based on a small sample of respondents. Also the study is limited to three –variable model and future research with an expanded model can help in further understanding.

## CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, the present study demonstrates that job involvement predicts employee engagement and suggests that affective commitment mediates this relationship highlighting the need for enhancing the emotional connect of the employees with the organization. Further research can build on these findings to determine other mediators of the relationship between job involvement and employee engagement.

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